



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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case that frequently when we turned to books advocating critical views identical with those we had been hearing, but written a few years ago, we were distinctly conscious of a chillier atmosphere than that breathed by our lecturers, who never let us lose from sight the fact that though in "sundry times and divers manners," He who revealed Himself in the Bible was God Himself.

Perhaps it was partly owing to the distance of Girton from Cambridge that fewer students were attracted to the lectures this year than last. "Flys" are expensive, no doubt, if you are not young enough to bicycle; but we all felt that if people only knew what they were missing they would have come in greater numbers. Those who would like information when the arrangements for next year are settled by the Committee can have it by writing to Miss Creighton, Hampton Court Palace, one or the two Honorary Secretaries, to whom the warmest thanks of the students are due for their unceasing and admirable work.

P.N.E.U. NOTES.

Edited by MISS F. NOËL ARMFIELD, Sec., 26, Victoria Street, S.W.
Tel. 479 Victoria.

To whom all Hon. Local Secs. are requested to send reports of all matters of interest connected with their branches, also 6 copies of any prospectuses or other papers they may print.

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NEW BRANCHES.

The Executive Committee has been approached with a view to starting Branches in the following places:—

BRADFORD.

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CARDIFF.—Names may be sent to Mrs. Hamilton, Blackladies, Dynas Powis.

DUNFERMLINE.—Mrs. Beveridge, Pitreavie, Dunfermline, would be glad to hear from people interested.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

SURBITON.

SWANSEA.

Readers of the *Parents' Review* living in these districts, or having friends there, are asked to communicate with Miss Armfield, 26, Victoria Street, S.W.

HYDE PARK AND BAYSWATER.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. E. L. Franklin, 50, Porchester Terrace, Hyde Park. "At Home" Thursday mornings, or by appointment.—The following arrangements have been made for the forthcoming session:—

October 12th.—At 3 p.m., 18, Pembridge Gardens (by kind permission of Mrs. Hart), Mrs. Holroyd Chaplin will read certain chapters out of *Home Education*, to be followed by discussion, tea and coffee, etc.

October 30th.—At 8.30 p.m., at 50, Porchester Terrace, the Rev. Canon Skrine will lecture on "The Training of Ambition," Mrs. Clement Parsons in the chair.

November 13th.—At 3.30 p.m., at 49, Harley Street (by kind permission of Mrs. Battle), chapters from *Home Education*, will be read by Lady Campbell.

November 23rd.—At 5 p.m., at 77, Gloucester Place (by kind permission of Mrs. Belpage), Dr. Savage will lecture on "Backward Children," Miss Gray, St. Paul's Girls' School, in the chair.

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FIVE LEVELS OF LIFE.

BY CONSTANCE L. MAYNARD,

Mistress of Westfield College, University of London.

EVERY day and hour of our lives we are called upon to act, but it is not often that we are called upon to give an account of the motives of our actions. The ceaseless stream of time runs by, and it is well now and then to stop, to look at the impelling forces that govern its flow, and ask ourselves the question that comes most often from the lips of our children: "Why?" Why are such and such things imperative and others optional? Why do I give many hours to this and yet say I have no time for that? What is the rule that underlies my choice? Perhaps I am working from automatic habit, or perhaps from the will of another and so have no real "motive" at all. If so, it is well to recognise the fact, but still we can go further and ask "Why?" Is this intended for me? Is there nothing better in life than this? Perhaps I am comparatively independent and have several hours a day in which I am not at the beck and call of others. Why do I spend them as I do? Given my outline of circumstances, am I making the wisest arrangement of its details? These are hard questions to answer. We have but one life apiece and that a short one and the stream of time flows with a subdued murmur over its stones, and though the banks may look monotonous in outline we never really pass the same point twice. To sum up the facts and definitely consider

them is work important enough for a life that is isolated, but for a life that is surrounded with children the importance is greatly enhanced. Here are young lives to be started off on the best course that we know of, and we should like to put compass and chart into their hands before we leave them, and give them the good, reasoned-out principles that are befitting the grown man and woman, as well as the good unreasoning instincts and habits that befit the child.

Just a hundred years ago a German philosopher called Johann Gottlieb Fichte was doing a noble work in educating his country into the morality that deserves liberty. Among many more abstruse works he wrote a little book called *The Way toward a Blessed Life*, and in that book, much of which is perhaps hardly intelligible to the ordinary reader, there lies one single page hidden that appears to me to be of very great value. In it he gives a brief enumeration of five different levels or planes of life, on which a man may live and act, a choice of five main motives, each one of which may be the guiding line of our days, determining the trend of our actions, and the principle on which we do, or leave undone, as the case may be. The whole scheme is but a few sentences, but if now we want to set in order before ourselves the various possibilities offered us, if we want to call them by their right names and appraise their respective values, we cannot do better than follow and fill out the outline suggested by Fichte. We will begin with the lowest plane and work up to the highest.

The first and lowest level we will call Swimming with the Stream. It means doing just what other people do because they do it, it means dependence on our circumstances for interest and for impetus. This is a life that skims the surface of pleasure, and needs constant change and variety. It is not, properly speaking, *life* at all, because it has no self-determination, no port whither it is bound, no enemies to combat, no aim to strive for. The world moves on, and such a mind moves with it, a captive to the motion, a position described by Wordsworth as embodying the last degree of helplessness:—

"She has no motion now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round on earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees."

Dead leaves float unresisting down the stream, and it is only the live fish who can swim against it, and these people prove that life is gone or almost gone by the way they roll feebly down whatever way the current drives. If they have a "must" in their lives, it is only the "must" of convention, if there is a "I couldn't possibly," you will generally find it refers to the wearing of a hat of the season before last, or the refusal or acceptance of an invitation. Such people follow but never lead, receive but do not give, drift with the varying current but do not swim a yard against it, grasp at all the pleasures but avoid the responsibilities of life. If you want to see the very last outcome of this life, or rather death-in-life, you may see it in the hotels at Nice and other such places, where people will live for months and even years together. Servants are a proverbial difficulty, therefore put off on someone else the tiresome duties of engaging, regulating and discharging them; housekeeping is a trouble, therefore pay someone well and let every detail be kept out of sight; even horses and a garden need perpetual care if they are to prosper, so let us abolish them all as our own, and live as guests in another man's house. The rich man, with his family and his tenants, has really a wider area of responsibilities than the poor man, though the way of escape into this region where there are no duties to others, is made easier to him by his wealth. But, my readers, because you happen to have but little, you are not to think that this desolate, lifeless existence passes you by. No indeed. The lad or girl in the country house who is bored to death on a rainy day, is on this platform and no higher, and so is the young wife of the business man who does the minimum of work at home, and then puts on her hat just "to see what is going on" at her neighbours, and so also is the poor woman who cannot undertake the burden of a thrifty and civilised existence and so stands at her door in slatternly pose hour after hour looking out on life and movement more energetic than her own. Human morality is like a pyramid, and if you were to cut a pyramid across horizontally into five planes of the same width, you would find that the lowest plane was far the largest in bulk. And this simile is, alas, true. Shall I tell you the test by which you may find out whether you belong to this class? It is

a very stringent one, but I think not unfair. It is whether you are *dull* when alone. Of course, I do not speak for a moment of the aged or invalided, or those under the stress of sorrow, but I speak of the ordinary normal person, whether man or woman. If a day of solitude is a thing to be deplored and avoided we belong to this lowest rank, but if on the other hand it opens a space for things we desire to accomplish, then, whatever our faults may be, we do not belong here. To have no root in oneself, no resources to draw on, to be *ennuyé, blasé*, empty, vague, restless in solitude, to look out here and there for a little excitement "pour me distraire"; what feeble helplessness do the very words imply! Here is a verbal picture of some girls on the morning after a ball, that has for a few days roused them into activity. The excitement is over, the stimulus is withdrawn, and they fall flat:—

"Maintenant c'est le jour; la vieille après le rêve,
La prose après les vers, c'est le vide et l'ennui,
C'est une bulle encore qui dans les mains nous crêpe,
Le plus triste jour du tout, c'est aujourd'hui."

What a mere morass has the little plot of good land assigned us, become under our foolish hands! Every good gift was there, earth, water, plants—time, energy, relations and duties—but by our own mismanagement it has become this useless bog. It has been said: *Ennui* has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and perhaps more suicides than despair." The last clause, even with its saving "perhaps" is one I should dispute, for the stage of *ennui* is seldom acute enough to produce the energy necessary for suicide, and the dead interests and the atrophied affections and the paralysed volitions live on in a ghastly semblance behind the human face. Is it not true to say it is not life, but a form of death? Hear Matthew Arnold's description of what he openly calls the life of the majority—drastic enough but only too true:—

"What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander,—are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,

Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die—
Perish—and no one asks,
Who, or what, they have been,
More than he asks what waves
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost ocean have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone."

Does the Bible say anything about such a life? It does. I Tim. v. 6: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Did we not describe it as death? You see we were but arriving by our own good sense at the point at which the Bible had arrived nearly two thousand years ago. Also note the pronoun "she," for I grieve to say this is on the whole more the fault of women than of men. The corresponding young man tends to be not so empty-headed, but more actively bad, reckless and dissolute, and it is generally the girl who is left to this life of vacuity, to make the best she can of it. Again read Jer. ii. 13: "My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water." A cistern holds a definite quantity of water, and if it has a leak in it, one can see the quantity diminishing. When we start in life there is a perpetual flow running in, youth, health, pleasure, always something new, and the cistern keeps so full for a little time, that we do not know there is a leak. But turn off one of those taps, and see how the leak gains! Turn off "money," and how it shrinks up, turn off "health," and how low it falls; and if even we escape these, there is one tap that is slowly turning off year by year, and that is "youth." Then the leak gains and gains, faster and yet faster, and we see one of the most miserable and degrading sights of the earth, people pretending to be young when they are old. There is only one cure for our poor broken cistern, but that is a perfect one. It is to have the "fountain of living waters" running in at the one end, and then, let the taps be turned off, let come what misfortunes may, it is always full, brimming full.

But let us leave this lowest plane, and come to the next, which we will call the Self-regarding Life. Here is real life, and real effort, but all directed towards the aggrandisement

of self. Such a life may be given to the self of pleasure, and then it is more wicked and more destructive than the mere swimming with the stream, and the more effort it puts forth to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, the more heedless it becomes of the rights of others, till it ends in unspeakable cruelty, such as disfigured the life of ancient Rome. The terrible thing is that this cruelty is not recognised as such, so necessary has the sacrifice become of one human being to another. In these directions lie slavery and corruption and greed and lust, and all the world's greatest horrors and blackest blots. But the self-regarding life has other objects besides mere pleasure, that are good and not evil in themselves. It has energy to bestow somewhere, and while its lowest aims are "I will be rich" and "I will be amused," it may have also in view, "I will be learned," "I will be great," "I will be respected," and these are good. Ambition is always nobler than the hunt for pleasure, because in ambition present self is sacrificed to future self, and that is a great deal better than no sacrifice at all. Even, as Browning describes so well in his *Easter Day*, the man who lives to make a collection of beetles, or to search for rare snuff-boxes, has some definite aim in life, which to a fractional amount is the better for his work, and whether this self-regarding life is, or is not, outwardly evil, depends mainly on the worth of the object chosen. But whatever it is, self is the centre and end of it all, the starting point of energy and the goal of effort; it is self all through, self from beginning to end. This is pre-eminently the man's fault, and that in its most evil sides, as well as in its nobler ones.

Does the Bible say anything about this level of life? It does indeed, directing its artillery more in this direction than in any other. Let us read a few of the verses. I. Tim. vi. 9: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Here is indeed an awful sentence. It begins with that most usual aim of the self-regarding life, "I will be rich," and it leads straight on, through two or three sequences, and then ends with the most terrible of all words, "perdition." Luke xii. 19: "I will say unto my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine

ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool." Here was labour, forethought, prudence, and at last the enjoyment of it all had come. Self has been working hard, and now self is pleased and triumphant in success, and God looks on and His only comment is, "Thou fool." Rev. xviii. 7, 14: "She hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously." "The fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee." This scarlet woman, the typical citizen of the earth has lived entirely for conquest and pleasure and luxury, and now all is over and gone and she is cast down and desolate. Matt. vi. 19: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal." Moth and rust; here we have silent deterioration. We never see moth and rust at their work. We only know that we put by safely the woollen garment or the bright steel sword, and that when we take it out again after the lapse of time it is a ruined garment, a nearly valueless sword. The thing is there, but it is not what it was; it is a worse thing. Even so ambitions are disappointing, and pleasures pall, and arts fade and love takes to himself wings and flies away, and sadly we turn over our heap of treasures and feel they are not what they were twenty years ago. The outer forms are all there, right enough, but the moth and rust have been eating at them while we were not looking. And if some things escape this melancholy fate and last on fair and strong, then the thieves "break through and steal," and there is an abrupt end to them all at once. A sudden turn in the road and our prospect is lost. The artist may become blind, or the musician deaf, and if even we escape these catastrophes, the great thief, Death, stands at the end of the way and claims the whole of our treasure.

So exceedingly important is it to enforce this view of life on the human race that beside scattered verses almost innumerable, one whole book of the Bible is given to the elucidation of this single point, and that is the Book of Ecclesiastes. The writer is shown to us as living in a most excellent position for seeing and handling the best that is in the world, mind as well as matter, and he is searching for good, happiness, well-being and true satisfaction. He seeks it in every direction, in mirth and laughter, in study and learning,

in music and agriculture and commerce, in spending wealth and in ruling men; he leaves no stone unturned, no place unvisited, he goes down to the very end of the road and he finds it is a *cul-de-sac*. It leads nowhere at all. He has to come straight back. With all his grand opportunities (better ones than you or I shall ever have) he has gained only negative knowledge, so back he comes to the ordinary high-road of life, and sets up a sign-post at the entrance of the lane called Wealth and on it he writes that all the world may read: "Good and Happiness are not down this road." The book of Ecclesiastes is a sermon on the negative half of a well-known text: "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again;" it does not go on to explain the other half.

The third level we come to is called the Self-controlled Life and here we step from the regions of evil into undoubted good. If we want to make man and his surroundings fit together we find two ways of effecting this. We may either take hold of the man's circumstances and try and bring them up to his desires, or we may take hold of the man and bring him down to his circumstances. The stone does not fit into its appointed place in the wall; you may either enlarge the cavity or chip the stone. Which is best? In nine cases out of ten, it is the stone that needs the chipping. The Scottish philosopher, Dugald Stewart, says, "The great secret of happiness is to study to accommodate our own minds to things external, rather than to accommodate things external to ourselves." To ensure contentment by abating our wants, to cast out passion and fever and fret, and to make a quiet fortress against disappointment, these are wise steps to take, these are the outworks of that power over the lower self that raises the man above his fellows and makes him a king indeed. Hear the greatest poet of the nineteenth century:—

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And because right is right to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

The higher points of the nature, the reason, conscience and will, are set over the lower, the crowd of desires and appetites

and fancies, that clamour to be heard, each one at the moment thinking itself to be of supreme importance. On this level the steady has control of the shifting, the permanent of the transitory, the invisible of the visible, and a noble type of character is realised. Twice in the course of history has it been seen on a large scale, once amid the Stoics of Imperial Rome, and once amid our English Puritans. The exterior in both cases may have been uncouth, and the Puritans have been a laughing-stock to the foolish and frivolous long enough, but in their spirit of brave inflexibility, of judging the insignificance of the shows of the world by the dignity of man's will and his immortal destinies, they have been and still are the very backbone of England's greatness. Such a character is so firm that it expands in solitude, is unshaken in misfortune, and can be happy unlooked at, unthanked, unappreciated. It is the character that rules the world. The typical Frenchman is very brave, but he needs an audience, or at any rate one spectator before he can do his best, but the typical Englishman does exactly the same things alone as he would before a crowd. We have now got out of the rocking and whirling of the stream of time and on to something solid and enduring.

Does the Bible say anything about such a life? It does. I. Cor. xvi. 13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men. Be strong." The thirteen words of our version are only seven in the Greek, a string of plural imperatives, given out like single words of command to a firing line. "Keep awake! Stand firm to the faith! Be manly (or heroic)! Be strong!" A verse far more mistranslated is I. Tim. vi. 6: "Godliness with contentment is great gain," and should be rather, "The service of God with self-rule (or self-sufficiency, or independence of outside help) is a very good thing indeed." But one might think this self-control might be more often mentioned in the Bible, seeing it is the foundation-stone of all goodness of character, but the truth is that it was not chiefly through Revelation, but rather through the ideals set before the Greek and Latin races, that our Creator was training the world in these matters. The heavenly Potter keeps both His right and left hand on the clay at once and though they may seem to oppose each other

in actual resistance, they are working towards a single end in fashioning the lump. That right and left hand we are wont to call religious and secular influences, but both are His. To a manly and energetic nature the gain of this self-order is obvious, and Revelation never teaches us what we can clearly find out for ourselves. The lesson was learned early on, as the *ἀρετή* of the Greek and the *virtus* of the Roman testify, and *virtue* is not an altogether happy translation. It means soundness and reliability, being uncomplaining, law-abiding, courageous and patient under hardship, in fact everything we mean by the word "manliness." This group of ideas is counted by the inspired writers as of great value. II. Peter i. 3: "He hath called us to glory and virtue." And again Phil. iv. 8: "If there be any virtue . . . think on these things."

But we must ascend higher, and the fourth level is called the Unselfish Life, and this again marks a great difference, for the heart is no longer one's own but is given away to another, whether a person or a cause. This is not so easy as it sounds, for nineteen-twentieths of the so-called love in the world is carried on on the second level only. It may be passionately strong and yet thoroughly selfish, owing all its vitality to the fact that the object is one's own. "My son, therefore he must get on." "My daughter, therefore she must be well-dressed and well-behaved." "My country, therefore it is necessarily the best in the world." "My cause, in which I have invested myself, therefore it must, it shall succeed." Lay aside this doubled, trebled, multiplied selfishness, and think of pure disinterested love, that will do good without reward and will work anonymously for its cause, and you have the most beautiful thing in the world. If in attaining "virtue" we stepped out of darkness and storm into clear, calm, working daylight, we now, in love, reach the sunshine that transforms duty into joy and prose into poetry. Here are some of its manifestations:—

The love of a Child, that ancient root of love from which all other loves spring. The instinct is beautiful in itself, but it is not this that I speak of now, not the maternal protective affection that we share with the cat and all the other higher animals, but the disinterested love of the true father and

mother, that which survives infancy and childhood and follows the nestlings when fledged as their wisest and best friend.

The love of a Leader, the treating one man as inherently better than another and being ready to die for him without a word. This kind of love was trained early in the world's history, and you may read in Sir Walter Scott's words one of the most pathetic examples of its force in the offer of Evan Maccombich and his six friends to die for Fergus McIvor.

The love of an Art, loved for its own sake and without external reward. The Florentines thus loved the Duomo at Florence, and thus did the Nuremberg poets and artists love their wondrous city.

The love of an Institution—a school, college, hospital, orphanage—something impersonal enough never entirely to appreciate the labour bestowed on it, and yet personal enough to demand the kind of labour that the parent gives to the child.

The love of one's Country; not the obvious devotion of the soldier merely, but the work of the good magistrate, landowner, statesman, teacher, all work that will make virtue more attractive and vice more repulsive, and therefore the country nobler.

The love of a Cause such as Temperance, the Abolition of Slavery, the Opium Traffic, social work at home. Nothing lasts under this strain but pure noble disinterestedness, for causes are sufficiently unpersonal to be thoroughly ungrateful. Thus we are led up step by step to the love of mankind, philanthropy proper. This is not mere giving, but consists in looking at any phase of suffering or poverty or injustice as if it were our very own, and must tax all our energies to get it remedied. It is the identification of ourself with the weak man, the *under* man, the man who is dumb but suffers, and the feeling of his woes as acutely and persistently as if they were our own and could not be endured another hour. But even suffering, bad as it is, is easier to deal with than our worst enemy, sin, and the very highest type of philanthropist is he who works on the mind as well as on the body and endeavours to raise the standard of living in moral and intellectual directions. Maeterlinck says, "When we in our

study of human history endeavour to gauge the moral force or greatness of a people or race, we have one standard of measurement only, the dignity and permanence of their ideal, and the self-abnegation with which they pursue it." Our age with all its faults is an altruistic age, and this though it is only the framework of the real thing we call love, yet it has great value, as making the expression of that love both more orderly and more effective. It is the best a nation or community can do, for love is of the individual. It is the channel ready dug for the water. The children, the sick, the cottars, the miners, the factory hands, every state and every trade of mankind that before was dumb and suffered in silence is now taken up by someone outside, someone who might have lived in ease and comfort and known nothing of the hard pressure, but who voluntarily stoops and puts his shoulder beneath the age-long load, and measures the intolerable weight.

Does the Bible say anything about this life of altruism and of love? It does indeed, so that the verses on this subject might be counted by the score. Phil. ii. 4: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," and this is to be done even if the other man's things are poverty, dirt, ignorance, disease and various disagreeable matters. Rom. xv. 1: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;" we who are not factory-hands are those who ought to take up the cause of those that are, and we who are quite free from the temptation to drink are the very right ones to work in every way we can for the miserable drunkards. It is always we who stand strong and firm on the land, who are right ones to help those who are struggling in the river. Gal. vi. 2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Not the soldier's little knapsack and accoutrements; they have weight but they are untransferable, and "every man shall bear his own burden" of individual responsibility. But the extra load, the heavy weight laid on by heredity or ill-health or degrading circumstances, this we can put out our hands to ease in some degree.

Matt. v. 9: "Blessed are the peace-makers." Not in closing our own quarrels, not in taking up questions that affect

ourselves, but interfering in causes that are not our own and carrying them through to justice and peace, in this is blessedness. The quarrels now are more between classes than persons, between ranks of society, between tenant and landlord, between labour and capital, between the various parts of the complex machinery of life; in all these there are jars and frictions that bear hardly on the welfare of individuals, especially on those on the underside. Lord Shaftesbury, I believe, introduced seventy-two Bills into Parliament in the course of his long life, and every one was an act of peace-making between class interests, every one was in favour of the weaker side, every one was a clear voice speaking for those who could not speak for themselves.

(To be continued.)